



STATE OF CONNECTICUT NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal
Department of Consumer Protection
Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2004

ATTORNEY GENERAL SUES J.K. HARRIS FOR DECEPTIVE MAILINGS OFFERING HELP WITH NONEXISTENT COURT CASES

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today announced he has sued J. K. Harris Financial Recovery Systems LLC (JKH-FRS) of South Carolina for sending Connecticut consumers letters offering to help them resolve nonexistent court cases. Blumenthal filed the lawsuit on behalf of Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) Commissioner Edwin R. Rodriguez.

In December, J.K. Harris sent letters to hundreds of consumers in New Haven, Meriden and elsewhere alleging that a "judgment" had been "filed" against them by a municipality in a court of law for nonpayment of an unspecified debt. The letters, which were ominously stamped "Final Notice," offered assistance in resolving the supposed court cases and paying off the debts.

In virtually all instances, there was no court case, let alone a judgment.

"J.K. Harris Financial Recovery Systems deceptively sought to scare consumers and solicit cash to pay nonexistent judgments," Blumenthal said. "The company's scheme to foster false financial fright and make a quick buck was illegal and reprehensible. These deceptive pitches are especially troubling because they undermine public trust in government by misrepresenting its actions. My office will seek full restitution for consumers panicked into paying and a court order."

"This company seeks to profit through panic," Rodriguez said. "Through its misleading and threatening promotional materials, it frightens consumers into seeking its assistance, even where no such assistance is warranted. I am strongly opposed to such exploitation. I hope this lawsuit brings financial restitution to those who have been harmed by this scam, and puts an end to this predatory practice."

MEDIA CONTACTS

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The Attorney General and the Commissioner urge consumers to be suspicious of unsolicited correspondence offering “help” with debts, court cases, or other problems. Such solicitations may be consumer scams that should be reported to DCP and the Attorney General’s Office.

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